

Although Applicants submit that claim 19 as a whole is allowable, at least two of the claimed method steps distinguish claim 19 from Otto.

First, claim 19 calls for the step of influencing the interactive voice response system (IVR) by the communication terminal equipment (KE) wherein the interactive voice response system (IVR) communicates a request for receiving an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment (AKE) to the automatic call distribution system (ADE). Claim 19 further calls for the step of transferring, giving the request for reserving, and the reservation of, the agent communication terminal equipment (AKE), by the communication system (KS) and outside of the automatic call distribution system (ACD) the communication terminal equipment (KE) from the interactive voice response system (IVR) to the reserved agent communication terminal equipment (AKE). Reference labels have been inserted in the claim text merely for reference to the example of Applicants' invention in Fig. 1 and are not intended to limit the claims. Applicants submit that Otto simply does not disclose or suggest the influencing step or the transferring step of claim 19.

Otto pertains to an automatic call distribution system for completing calls to selected agents. Normally callers to the automatic call distribution system are frequently assigned a preferred agent for handling their transaction. When these callers call the basic number of the automatic call distribution system, they are identified and routed preferably to the preferred agent if that agent is logged on to the system. If the callers have not completed a transaction, the agent who is serving a call for that transaction provides a transaction number to the caller and the caller subsequently is connected to the agent associated with that transaction number. Callers can normally be served by the same agent while still having their calls queued to any available agent of the automatic call distribution system. See Otto, column 1, lines 50-column 2, line 24.

The Office Action alleges that a speech synthesizer 28 (Fig. 1) of Otto is an interactive voice response system. However, Otto does not disclose or suggest that the speech synthesizer is an interactive voice response system. In Otto there is no description of the speech synthesizer 28. The function of the Otto speech synthesizer is merely to recognize a number spoken by a caller. See Otto, column 4, lines 16-18. Otto does not disclose or suggest that the speech synthesizer communicate a request for reserving an available agent communication terminal equipment to an automatic call distribution system as claimed in Applicants' influencing step. Furthermore, the existence of a speech synthesizer in Otto does not indicate to a skilled person

the existence of an interactive voice response system because Otto does not describe controlling of an interactive voice response system by communication terminal equipment or automatically forwarding of the selected information as voice information from the voice response system to the calling communication terminal equipment.

As mentioned above, Otto does not disclose a reserving request from the speech synthesizer 28 to the automatic call distribution system. Further, Otto does disclose the common reservation of agent communication terminal equipment. Fig. 4a, labels 107 and 109, of Otto referred to in the Office Action is only described as the automatic check of the received ANI and the check of the caller number which is transmitted from the caller. Applicants' reservation of an agent is different from Otto which finds a preferred agent terminal or an agent terminal of an preferred agent group. Further, Applicants' reservation of an agent is different from the queuing, in Otto, of a subscriber terminal for an agent terminal because a reservation of an agent is related to a currently available agent terminal. When an agent terminal is reserved the communication terminal equipment can be connected directly with the reserved agent terminal.

Accordingly, Otto does not disclose an interactive voice response system which is connected with an automatic call distribution system and there is no indication about a request for reserving of an available one of the at least one agent communication terminal equipment or the reserving of an available agent communication terminal equipment.

Even further, Applicants' claimed method calls for transferring....the communication terminal equipment from the interactive voice response system to the reserved agent communication terminal equipment. Otto does not disclose or suggest transferring a caller from the speech synthesizer to the preferred agent. Again, the speech recognition system of Otto merely recognizes a number spoken by the caller.

Thus, claim 19 is allowable over Otto. Furthermore, claims 21-22, 25, 28, and 30 are allowable over Otto for the same reasons.

As to the § 103(a) rejection in view of Otto and Morganstein et al., Morganstein et al. teaches the queuing of calling parties waiting to be connected to an agent. The queuing of calling parties is not Applicants' request for reservation or reservation of an agent terminal equipment because the reservation is related to currently available agent terminal equipment. The cyclically interrogating of the status of the agent communication terminal equipment is related to the current availability and not for the queuing of the agent communication terminal

equipment. When the agent communication terminal equipment is currently available, then the calling terminal equipment will be connected with the available agent communication terminal equipment.

Thus, claim 22 is allowable over Otto in view of Morganstein et al.

As to the § 103(a) rejection of claims 28-29 in view of Otto and Costello et al., Otto does not disclose an interactive voice response system and does not disclose the request for reserving and the reserving of currently available agent communication equipment. Further, there is no connection between the automatic call distribution system and an interactive voice response system. This means that it is not necessary for a logon request to logon the interactive voice response system by the automatic call distribution system. Costello et al. does not remedy the deficiencies of Otto. For example, Costello does not disclose an interactive voice response system which is connectable with an automatic call distribution system.

Thus, claims 28-29 are allowable over Otto in view of Costello et al.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that all claims are allowable and the application is in condition for allowance.

Respectfully submitted,

BELL, BOYD & LLOYD LLC

BY 

Michael S. Leonard

Reg. No. 37,557

P.O. Box 1135

Chicago, Illinois 60690-1135

Phone: (312) 807-4270

Date: December 20, 2002